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On the importance of sound doctrine ; or of clear ideas and a firm belief of the divinely revealed system of truth and duty.

ONE method taken by Free-thinkers, to render people indifferent about the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, or their opposite, is, to speak of them as mere *speculative opinions*, which men may hold or reject, consistently with being equally good, useful and happy. But I trust, that from a careful attention to the nature of things, and to the experience of mankind, it will appear, that the opinions which men hold, or the things which they receive for truth, have great influence on their tempers and conduct. And if we consult the scriptures, we shall find, that great stress is laid on *the truth, or sound doctrine* ; as an important and necessary means of piety and virtue.

An idea of this kind is suggested by Paul's charge to Titus, in connection with the following words, recorded in Tit. ii. 1—6. "But speak thou the

things which become sound doctrine : that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded."

Sound doctrine, then, in Paul's estimation, is of great importance for promoting sobriety, gravity, temperance, &c ; and therefore the preachers of the gospel should be careful to speak those things, and those only, which become it, which are implied in it and agreeable to it, and calculated to illustrate its nature and tendency ; and to recommend and enforce the belief and reception of it, and a temper and conduct agreeable to it.

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By sound doctrine the apostle means the uncorrupted, the pure and wholesome doctrine contained in the gospel—the same with the *truth* which is according to godliness. This may be readily seen by comparing 1 Tim. vi. 3, with Tit. i. 1, 9; and 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. The original word translated *sound*, in several places where the phrase *sound doctrine* occurs, signifies wholesome, salutary, healing or healthy—such as is adapted and tends to produce, or to preserve and promote a sound, healthy state. And since, where sound doctrine is mentioned, there is a special reference to moral or spiritual health and soundness, sound doctrine comprises all those pure and wholesome truths, instructions and precepts, which are opposed to and suited to prevent or correct the moral disorders of mankind; and to produce or preserve and promote a spiritually sound and healthy state. The apostle accordingly considers all the various sins and transgressions, and all the corrupt lusts of men, as being contrary to, and forbidden by sound doctrine. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. and 2 Tim. iv. 3.

The importance of understanding, believing and embracing sound doctrine; and consequently, of its being clearly exhibited and earnestly inculcated, may in some measure appear, 1. From a view of the natural tendency, effects and consequences of the ideas and belief which men entertain of God. Sound doctrine exhibits the truth with respect to the being and perfections of God, and his government of the world.

The Atheist—the man who denies the existence of a Su-

preme Being, a Creator and Governor of the world—who believes there is no God, and consequently no divine law, no divine providence, and no future state of rewards and punishments, will, as the natural consequence of this belief, feel himself under no restraint in the indulgence and gratification of his inclinations, lusts and passions, any further than he finds it necessary for his own safety, or his worldly interest and reputation. No promise or oath will bind such a man, when he thinks it for his interest to violate it. There is nothing to restrain him from making the strongest professions of a warm attachment to our interest—of the most upright, honorable and benevolent intentions, and the sincerest friendship, and confirming them with an oath, for no other purpose than to deceive us, and bring us under his power, and make us subservient to the accomplishment of his base and iniquitous designs.

Again, If men believe the existence of a deity, but entertain such wrong notions concerning him, as verily to think there are gods and lords many—one supreme, and many subordinate deities, who share together, tho' in different degrees, in the government of the world, and are to share in the regard and religious homage of mankind; as the pagan nations did;—if they believe there are male and female deities, of various characters and dispositions, and some of them addicted to the lusts and vices, to which mankind are exceedingly prone; they *will*, as the natural consequence of this belief, not only divide their homage between a number of deities;

but also think it right and even a duty, pleasing and acceptable to their gods, to honor them by indulging the lusts and practising the debaucheries, to which they suppose them addicted. So the fact proved among the pagans. Bacchus, their god of wine, they honored with drunken frolics, and Venus, with the most shocking lewdness and prostitution. This was the natural consequence of their principles, or of the ideas which they entertained concerning their deities.

If we think that God is such a one as ourselves, we shall, of course, think that he hath no special displeasure at us for being and doing, as we are and do. If we verily think that God hath no regard to truth or justice—that he is a deceitful, false, treacherous being; we shall have no apprehension of his displeasure, on the account, if we are so too.

If we think that God is not omniscient—that we can conceal our thoughts and motives from his knowledge, or that he may be imposed upon and deceived; this opinion will naturally lead us to practise the basest hypocrisy. Or, If we verily believe the true God is such a being, that he will never punish any of the human race in the next world, let them conduct how they will in this; this belief will at once free our minds from all those restraints from numerous crimes, which the firm belief of future punishment has a tendency to produce.

But if we constantly and firmly believe, that there is one only living and true God, who made and preserves and governs the universe and all that is therein—

that he is eternal, independent, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, and infinitely wise and holy—that he loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness—that we must all appear and give account of ourselves to him—that he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, and render to every man according to his deeds; how great and powerful must be the tendency of such a belief, to restrain from sin, and to excite to virtue and piety?

Hence, I conceive, it will be evident to every considerate mind, that sound doctrine, or the truth, with respect to the being and perfections of God, is of vast importance to be known and believed, in order to preserve and restrain from innumerable enormities, to which depraved human nature is strongly inclined; and to excite to the study and practice of piety towards God, and of justice and mercy towards men. And in my mind, it is beyond all controversy, a real fact, that the knowledge and belief of God, and of their accountableness to him, which mankind actually have, doth really prevent a vast deal of wickedness, injustice, oppression and cruelty, which otherwise would be committed.

Further, If there be one only living and true God, it is doubtless of great importance to us, to acknowledge his being and perfections with proper feelings and affections, answerable to his character and providence, and to our relation to him, and to give him the glory due to his name. But this cannot be done without some knowledge and

belief of the truth respecting his being and character ; nor without this, can we know whether we love or hate, honor or dishonor, acknowledge or deny him. How is it possible that we should exercise proper feelings and affections towards the Deity, when we have no knowledge or belief of the truth respecting his being and character ? And in case our ideas respecting his character are essentially erroneous and contrary to the truth, we shall be liable to think we love and honor him, when in reality we hate and deny him.

If we verily think the true God is a being of such a disposition, as to approve and be pleased with persons of our tempers and ways, when in truth he disapproves and hates them ; we shall naturally think we love him, when in reality we hate the only true God. This appears to have been the case with the Pharisees, when Christ was on earth. They saw and hated both Christ and his father ; and yet thought that they loved God, and were approved and accepted of him. So very erroneous were their ideas of his real character.

A man may be conscious, that the idea of God as a being, who is disposed to punish, and will actually punish, many of the sinful children of men, with endless and inexpressible misery, is cordially disapproved and hated by him ; and yet, being persuaded in his own mind, that no such God exists, but that the true God is disposed to and will make all mankind eternally happy, he is highly pleased with him and heartily loves him.—Now if it should finally appear, that the God whom he loves,

has no existence, and that the God whom he hates, a God who is disposed to and will punish many with endless misery, is in fact the true God ; it will then appear, that he thought he loved and honored the true God, when in fact he hated and denied him.

These cases may be sufficient, as specimens, to show, that sound doctrine or the truth, with respect to the being and character of God, is of the last importance to be known and believed by us, in order to our exercising proper affections towards him, and to guard us against the most pernicious and fatal delusion.

2. The importance of sound doctrine may further appear, from a view of the natural tendency and consequences of the ideas, which men entertain respecting the divine law.

If we think there is no divine law, and that virtue and vice, as applied to the volitions and actions of men, are mere empty names—if we persuade ourselves into a belief, that every thing being immutably fixed by fate, or by a divine decree, it is impossible that men should be morally commendable or blameworthy for any of their exercises or actions—that it is a matter of perfect indifference, as to desert of reward or punishment, how we feel and conduct : if we think and believe thus, as some have professed to do, the consequence will naturally be, that we shall feel ourselves under no obligation to refrain from the things commonly accounted wrong and vicious, or to practise what is commonly accounted virtuous, any further than we find necessary for our personal

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safety, or present interest. Or, If we believe there is a divine law binding upon us by the authority of God, but entertain grossly wrong ideas of its tenor and import—if we think it requires only external actions, but has no regard to the temper and exercises of the heart ; we shall naturally think we keep it, if our external actions are such as we suppose it requires, whatever be the disposition and exercises of our hearts : and therefore, if the law doth really regard the heart, and that primarily and chiefly, we shall think we keep it, when we yield no true obedience, and feel ourselves free from obligation to that which is principally regarded and required by it.

So likewise, if we think the divine law, in requiring us to love our neighbors as ourselves, means only that we shall love our friends and those who love us, but hate our enemies, when in truth it requires us to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to them that hate us ; we shall naturally think we keep it when we live in the habitual, allowed transgression of it. Or if we think the divine law, as in force with respect to mankind in their fallen, impotent, depraved state, requires only such sincere, imperfect obedience, as we are now in all respects able to perform ; then, in case we think we perform this sincere, imperfect obedience, we shall naturally conclude that we do as much as the divine law doth or can reasonably require of us in our present circumstances ; and accordingly feel as though we were justified in the sight of God on the ground of our own obedience. Whereas,

if the law of God doth now require perfect holiness in heart and life, on pain of the curse ; we are condemned by it for every imperfection—for every failure of perfect obedience or of perfect holiness in thought, word and deed, and have no way to escape the curse, but of mere grace through the atonement made by the blood of Christ.—Hence, it evidently appears to be of great importance to us, to understand and believe sound doctrine, the real truth, with respect to the nature of virtue and vice, sin and holiness, and to the real tenor, import and extent of the divine law.

3. The same truth may also appear, if we consider how differently we shall naturally feel and act, according to the different ideas which we entertain of our own character and state, or of the character and state of mankind.

If we verily believe, that we are in a fallen, guilty state, dead in sin, and under a righteous sentence of condemnation, and that there is no way of deliverance and salvation for us, except of the free and sovereign grace of God, through the mediation and merits of Jesus Christ ; *this* view and belief will naturally tend to make us feel that our present condition is awfully dangerous and threatening, and not to be rested in—that we are lost for ever, without the interposition of divine power and grace for our recovery ; that this is of infinite importance to us ; and it will accordingly tend to excite us to inquire and seek or cry for mercy, with great earnestness. Whereas, if such as now mentioned be our real character and state ; and we, nevertheless,

think that we are not in a fallen, guilty, condemned state, to be sure, that we are not totally depraved, but have, at least, some remains of moral goodness, and are capable of securing the divine favor and our own happiness ; we shall accordingly feel, and be likely to act, as though our danger was comparatively small, when, in truth, it is exceedingly great.

4. The vast importance of sound doctrine may further appear, from a view of the embarrassment and pernicious consequences, naturally resulting from ignorance of the truth, or holding essentially wrong opinions, concerning the person and character of Jesus Christ.

Among the professed believers of the New-Testament, there have been, and still are, more especially, three materially different opinions concerning the real character of Jesus Christ. One is, that he is by nature God, the second of three divine persons in the Godhead ; and that he assumed the nature of man into personal union with his divine nature, so that he is both God and man in two distinct natures and but one person. This is called the orthodox opinion or faith.

Another opinion is, that Christ is not by nature God, though vastly superior to any mere man—that his superior nature was as really created by God, as any other creature—that he is the first and by far the greatest creature which God ever made, and taken into some peculiar relation to or union with God, though not a strict, personal union ; and that he in time became united to the human na-

ture, or assumed a human body, &c.

A third opinion is, that he is a mere man, and had no existence before his conception by Mary ; and that he died, not as a substitute for sinners, to make atonement or satisfaction for their sins, but as a martyr, &c.

If a man is utterly undetermined in his own mind, which of these opinions is true ; he must feel himself greatly embarrassed, as to the respect and homage which he may and ought to render to Christ.

If we verily believe that Jesus Christ is a divine person and really by nature God, we shall feel ourselves obliged, and be naturally led, to pay him the respect and render to him the homage, due to God ; which, in case he is a mere creature, would be idolatry. But if we think he is a mere created being, however great, or a mere man, we shall not dare to render to him—we shall deny and withhold from him, the respect and worship due to God ; which, in case he is truly God, we ought to render to him.—Moreover, If we think, with the Socinians, that Christ is a mere man, and died, not as a substitute for sinners to atone for their sins, but only as a martyr, to seal with his blood the truth of his doctrine, and to set us an example of patient suffering for righteousness' sake ; we shall place no dependence on and have no regard to his death as an atonement for our sins ; but shall endeavor to establish our own righteousness, as the only ground of justification and a title to eternal life ; and thereby, if the orthodox opinion is true, exclude ourselves from any benefit by

Christ, considered as a Redeemer and Saviour. For trusting in our own righteousness, repentance, virtue and obedience, as the ground and procuring cause of our acceptance with God, is evidently inconsistent with trusting in the righteousness of Christ as the only foundation of our justification. He who trusts in his own righteousness to intitle him to the favor of God, does by that very act reject the righteousness of Christ, and must fail of acceptance, if his own righteousness proves insufficient. So an inspired apostle appears to have taught. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal. v. 2, 3, 4.

How every way interesting and important, then, must it be to us, to *understand and believe and embrace the truth*, with respect to the person, character and mediation of Christ, as stated and exhibited in the sound doctrine delivered by him and his apostles? Christ's words in John xvii. 3. plainly import, that eternal life consists in and is connected with the knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. But whilst two persons hold opinions, concerning the person and character and work of Christ, so directly contrary to one another, and so mutually subversive the one of the other, as the orthodox and the Socinian, is it possible that both should have the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath

sent? Surely the opinion of one or the other must be fundamentally and essentially erroneous—not merely different from, but directly opposed to and subversive of the real truth.

3. The great importance of sound doctrine may also appear, from a view of the perplexing difficulties and pernicious consequences attending or naturally following from ignorance of the truth, and essentially erroneous opinions, respecting the way and terms of acceptance with God.

Is it not evidently of high and unspeakable importance to dependent creatures, and especially to fallen, guilty creatures, to know whether there be any way in which they may have acceptable access to God—any terms, on which they may have acceptance with him?—and if any, what they are?

With what distressing anxiety and painful uncertainty, do the scriptures represent a guilty man inquiring, wherewith he shall come before the Lord, and bow himself before the high God? "Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Micah vi. 6, 7.

Certainly a creature, conscious and thoroughly convinced that he is a sinner, and as such deserving and exposed to the dreadful wrath of God, must be painfully solicitous to know whether it be possible, and if so, how, or, in what way, or by what means, it is possible, that he may be pardoned and accepted.

of God. And if he is totally ignorant or utterly at a loss as to what is the truth in this respect, he must feel himself in a very perplexed and painfully embarrassing situation.

The sound doctrine of the gospel, well understood, would at once relieve him from this painful embarrassment and perplexing difficulty; and on this account, in this view, it of great importance that it should be clearly exhibited, and well understood.

Again, If men are ever so well satisfied, that there is a way, in which they may be accepted of God and happy in the world to come, but entertain essentially wrong ideas and opinions about it, the consequence may be fatally pernicious. If, like the Pharisees and many of the Jews, any think the only way of obtaining acceptance with God and eternal life, is by virtue of their own obedience and good works, and accordingly, go about to establish their own righteousness; whilst, in truth, this is impracticable, and the only way of salvation is by virtue of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, through faith in his blood; it is easy to see, that they are in the utmost danger of perishing for ever, whilst they view themselves as being in the sure way to everlasting happiness. Or if any think the sure way to happiness is by masses, and prayers to saints and angels and the virgin Mary, to intercede for them—by auricular confession and penances, and giving large sums to priests or to the church, to obtain absolution from their sins, and exemption or deliverance from the pains of purgatory, and by

believing as the church of Rome believes and conforming to its rites and ceremonies; whilst, in truth, these things imply a rejection of Christ and his righteousness, and are an abomination in the sight of God; it will then be readily seen, that such persons are pleasing themselves with the hope of future happiness, whilst they are pursuing the way which leads to death, and are in great danger of perishing in their delusion.

Or if any think the way to make sure of eternal life, is to believe firmly that they are already justified by the righteousness of Christ, even before they repent—that God is already their reconciled God and Father, who hath forgiven their sins and promised them eternal life, and under the influence of this belief, to rejoice in him and love and praise and serve him; and if at the same time, the truth is that no one is actually pardoned and justified before he repents and believes in Christ; it is then evident, that all such persons are in great danger of deceiving themselves by the belief of a lie.

Or if any think that Christ hath actually purchased eternal life for all mankind, and will in fact, sooner or later, put all into actual possession of it, whatever be their tempers and conduct during their abode on the earth; they will of course believe themselves sure of eternal happiness, though they live in sin, and continue impenitent to the last moment of their lives. But if this be a mistake, and directly contrary to the truth of the gospel, it will probably prove a most pernicious mistake, and, to them who retain it to the

last, issue in their most awful disappointment and utter ruin.

These several cases, out of the vast variety which might be mentioned, are stated, as samples, to show, that essentially erroneous and false notions respecting the way or terms of acceptance with God, tend to and are naturally productive of the most fatally pernicious consequences; and thereby to illustrate the vast importance of a clear exhibition and right idea of the truth or sound doctrine, with respect to the all-important article of the way or terms of acceptance with God. Mistakes respecting this point are far more dangerous than respecting many others. For if we essentially err and fail here, or ground our hopes on an essentially different foundation to the rejection of the true, and persevere in the mistake, we are lost for ever, however knowing and orthodox we may be in many other points.—What then can be more important to mankind, than a right understanding and belief of the sound doctrine, the pure and uncorrupted truth of the gospel, respecting the only way of acceptance with God? And what, of course, can be more important to be clearly and plainly preached?—Once more,

6. Sound doctrine is of great importance, to assist us in judging what we may and ought to do, or to forbear and avoid.

Our own reason, depraved, selfish, and prejudiced, as we are, is a very imperfect and deceitful guide. Men, who form their opinions of what they may or ought to do or to forbear, independently of or without any assistance from the sound doctrine exhibited in the gospel, are

apt to indulge and justify themselves in gross enormities and abominable iniquities. Witness the case of the Pagan nations, as stated by Paul in Rom. i.—And where the gospel is, in a measure promulgated, and a general belief of it professed, they who do not carefully attend to it, and understand and pay a conscientious regard to its instructions and precepts, appear to think it warrantable, to indulge to and do many things contrary to the plain tenor of its doctrines and commands; and to live in the habitual neglect of many things which they ought to do, and which, according to the plain tenor of the scriptures, they are indispensibly bound to perform. Instances of this kind may be seen in those who think it right and warrantable to render evil for evil, in the way of private or personal revenge—to hate and persecute their enemies—to settle disputes and seek satisfaction for insults and injuries, by duelling or other open violence—to take advantage of the weakness, wants, or ignorance of others, to advance their own interests at others' expense—to dissemble, and even to contradict the truth and utter falsehood, when it appears to them highly necessary for their own interest or safety—to neglect the payment of their just debts, though in their power to pay them, and to violate their contracts and engagements, when it appears to them convenient and greatly conducive to their worldly interest—to neglect the support of the poor—to withhold or evade, as far as they can without greater pecuniary loss, the legally required contributions, for the support of govern-

ment and defraying the expenses necessary for the general welfare of the community, state, or nation—and to indulge and gratify several of the strong inclinations, lusts and passions of the body and the mind. If the sound doctrine of the word of God, in regard to both faith and practice, was well understood and conscientiously regarded, it would readily be seen that these and numerous such like things, which some allow and justify, are utterly unjustifiable, contrary to the will of God, and expose to his wrath. And what indeed can be plainer, than that a clear understanding of the wholesome doctrine of sacred writ, is indispensibly necessary, to enable us to see and determine with certainty, how we ought to worship and serve the Lord our God; and what things we ought to and may warrantably do; and what we ought to refrain from and avoid? Hence, therefore, it appears to be highly important, that sound doctrine should be clearly preached and faithfully inculcated.

These observations will now be closed with a few brief inferences, naturally resulting from the whole that has been said.

1. It may hence appear that a large share of a gospel-minister's business, in point of preaching, is to state and explain, exhibit and inculcate the doctrine contained in the scriptures; and to distinguish it clearly from the unsound, corrupt and false principles and opinions, which tend to obscure, pervert or undermine it. All preachers of the gospel should copy the apostolic example, by renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not

walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, *by manifesting of the truth*, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Again,

2. It may hence appear, that it is a great privilege to a people to sit under that ministry, by which sound doctrine is plainly preached, clearly exhibited, and suitably inculcated and enforced. And on the other hand, That it is a great calamity to sit under the ministry, by which the sound doctrine of the gospel is neglected or kept out of sight, or artfully undermined and subverted, and erroneous opinions, or a corrupt system substituted in its stead.—Hence, on the whole,

3. We may see the great and unspeakable privilege of having the holy scriptures in our hands, and the vast importance of reading and searching them with care and diligence, and of bringing every doctrine to the test of these divinely inspired writings. And let us so heedfully regard them, and give them such a cordial reception and entertainment, that, through the attending power of the Holy Spirit, we may find them able to make us wise to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and to furnish us thoroughly unto every good work.

PAREPIDEMOS.

On Justification.

BELIEVERS are subjects of justification, and at the day of retribution they will be openly acquitted in the presence of the assembled universe, and pro-

nounced blessed. God will justify them from motives of perfect benevolence; and infinite wisdom, inflexible justice, and unbounded mercy will be equally maintained by his holy decision. But several things are necessary to render believers proper subjects for justification, and by these several things they are in a sense justified, as these will all vindicate the ways of Jehovah before the intelligent universe, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. Although the scriptures plainly declare that believers are justified by several things, yet it must not be understood that they are justified by each of those things in the same sense, yet there must be a sense in which they are really justified by each of them, in order to display the harmony of the scriptures and the beauty of the divine government. It is proper to notice here that nothing is designed to be understood in what follows, to exclude all from final justification, who have not arrived to years of understanding or that remain in heathenish ignorance; for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness can shine into their hearts as he did into Cornelius' while speculatively ignorant of the way of salvation, and by the same almighty power babes may be sanctified like Jeremiah, from their mother's womb, and of such may be the kingdom of heaven. But of those to whom much is given much will be required.

We shall now attempt to point out in what sense believers are justified by each of those things mentioned in the gospel, and then notice the reason why they are all necessary for gos-

pel justification; to which will be added several inferences.

The several things by which believers are said in the scriptures to be justified are,

1. *The grace of God.*

"Being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

2. *The blood of Christ.*

"Being justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him."

3. *Faith in Christ.*

"A man is justified by faith."

4. *Gracious words.*

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified."

5. *Good works.*

"Ye see how that by works a man is justified."

Gospel justification stands opposed to condemnation, and supposes the demands of the law satisfied in order to vindicate the Judge in pronouncing justification upon the ill deserving; "for grace reigns through righteousness." Believers are justified first by the grace of God, for, says the apostle, "being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." A gracious act, is favor shown to the ill deserving. Believers are therefore ill deserving as they are justified freely by the grace of God.—When man had violated the law of his God, and stood justly exposed to the threatened penalty, which was eternal condemnation, having no created eye that could pity, nor created arm that could save, then was a time of God's love, for his own almighty arm wrought salvation. He laid help upon one that was mighty to save, one who could honor the law which man had broken, and suf-

ment and defraying the expenses necessary for the general welfare of the community, state, or nation—and to indulge and gratify several of the strong inclinations, lusts and passions of the body and the mind. If the sound doctrine of the word of God, in regard to both faith and practice, was well understood and conscientiously regarded, it would readily be seen that these and numerous such like things, which some allow and justify, are utterly unjustifiable, contrary to the will of God, and expose to his wrath. And what indeed can be plainer, than that a clear understanding of the wholesome doctrine of sacred writ, is indispensibly necessary, to enable us to see and determine with certainty, how we ought to worship and serve the Lord our God; and what things we ought to and may warrantably do; and what we ought to refrain from and avoid? Hence, therefore, it appears to be highly important, that sound doctrine should be clearly preached and faithfully inculcated.

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On Justification.

BELIEVERS are subjects of justification, and at the day of retribution they will be openly acquitted in the presence of the assembled universe, and pro-

nounced blessed. God will justify them from motives of perfect benevolence; and infinite wisdom, inflexible justice, and unbounded mercy will be equally maintained by his holy decision. But several things are necessary to render believers proper subjects for justification, and by these several things they are in a sense justified, as these will all vindicate the ways of Jehovah before the intelligent universe, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed. Although the scriptures plainly declare that believers are justified by several things, yet it must not be understood that they are justified by each of those things in the same sense, yet there must be a sense in which they are really justified by each of them, in order to display the harmony of the scriptures and the beauty of the divine government. It is proper to notice here that nothing is designed to be understood in what follows, to exclude all from final justification, who have not arrived to years of understanding or that remain in heathenish ignorance; for God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness can shine into their hearts as he did into Cornelius' while speculatively ignorant of the way of salvation, and by the same almighty power babes may be sanctified like Jeremiah, from their mother's womb, and of such may be the kingdom of heaven. But of those to whom much is given much will be required.

We shall now attempt to point out in what sense believers are justified by each of those things mentioned in the gospel, and then notice the reason why they are all necessary for gos-

pel justification; to which will be added several inferences.

The several things by which believers are said in the scriptures to be justified are,

1. *The grace of God.*

"Being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

2. *The blood of Christ.*

"Being justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him."

3. *Faith in Christ.*

"A man is justified by faith."

4. *Gracious words.*

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified."

5. *Good works.*

"Ye see how that by works a man is justified."

Gospel justification stands opposed to condemnation, and supposes the demands of the law satisfied in order to vindicate the Judge in pronouncing justification upon the ill deserving; "for grace reigns through righteousness." Believers are justified first by the grace of God, for, says the apostle, "being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." A gracious act, is favor shown to the ill deserving. Believers are therefore ill deserving as they are justified freely by the grace of God.—When man had violated the law of his God, and stood justly exposed to the threatened penalty, which was eternal condemnation, having no created eye that could pity, nor created arm that could save, then was a time of God's love, for his own almighty arm wrought salvation. He laid help upon one that was mighty to save, one who could honor the law which man had broken, and suf-

fer its penalty that he might live. It was infinite benevolence which moved God to concert and effect a plan that would render him just in justifying the believer. If the grace of God had not been exerted in behalf of fallen man, he must have for ever eaten the fruit of his own doings, and been filled with his own devices; "but where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Divine love, that wonder into which the angels desire to look, concerted and effected the whole plan of gospel justification; for "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." And in this sense are believers justified by the grace of God.

2. Believers are justified by the blood of Christ; for, says the apostle, "being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him." What Christ has done and suffered is the ground on which God justifies. The shedding of Christ's blood, "who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God," made an atonement for the sins of the world, so that God can be glorified in forgiving the penitent. In order to get a just idea of the atonement, it will be here necessary to notice the nature and tendency of sin, and the reasons why God has threatened eternal punishment against it; and then what Christ has done and suffered, which answers the same end in the divine government, as the execution of the penalty upon the sinner.

Sin in its nature and tendency introduces disorder, and spreads desolation and misery, and without controul would annihilate the happiness of the universe. In

its nature and tendency it is therefore an infinite evil; "sin is exceeding sinful," exceeding all bounds to calculate, or figures to represent it. It deserves from goodness infinite opposition, that its nature may be exposed, and its tendency counteracted. Justice to the universe requires infinite opposition to sin. To execute justice, and display the evil of sin by manifesting an holy opposition against it, were reasons why God pronounced eternal condemnation on the sinner; it was not because he delighted in the misery of his creatures, for he delights not in the death of him that dieth, but on the contrary, because his tender mercies are over all his works, he discouraged rebellion with a penalty equal to its desert. God's holy nature is manifested in proportion to his opposition against evil. Should he therefore abate, in the least degree, the penalty annexed to transgression, he would so far abate his infinite love for holiness, and opposition to evil. Hence we see that the penalty annexed to transgression was to execute justice, show the evil of sin, and display the holy attributes of Jehovah. It is written, "By the law is the knowledge of sin; for without law sin was dead."

We will now attend to what Christ has done and suffered, which answers the same end in the divine government as the execution of the penalty upon all transgressors. And,

1. He has obeyed the law which sinners have broken. But this instead of justifying condemns them, for it proves that the law was reasonable, holy, just, and good; it justifies the

lawgiver, but not the transgressor, and manifests the unreasonableness of sin, in a greater degree, but it does not display its infinite turpitude. 2. He who knew no sin neither was guile found in his mouth, voluntarily put himself in the place of transgressors, and suffered awhile all the malice of earth and hell to rage against him without controul. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him;" so that by his stripes we might be healed.—When the Son of God, who was the everlasting delight of the Father, that lamb who was without spot or blemish, became a victim of envy and malice, those offsprings of sin, then its accursed nature could be seen, for it wounded him without a cause. Here eternal goodness was despised, infinite love hated, and unbounded benevolence persecuted unto death, even the ignominious death of the cross.—What a wonder of love and condescension is this, that the church of God should be purchased with his own blood; for it was the dignity of the Son of God that gave efficacy to his atonement. It was the divine nature which gave the blood of Christ infinite value; for he was God manifest in the flesh.

When the Prince of life and glory was brought as a sheep to the slaughter, and crucified as the vilest malefactor, suffering all the pain and contempt, which devils could invent and envious man inflict under the reign of the powers of darkness, then the evil nature of sin appeared in its true colors; it could have appeared no greater if all trans-

gressors had suffered to all eternity their just deserts. When Christ poured out his blood upon the cross, to make expiation for sin, he approved the penalty threatened to transgressors, manifesting that it did not exceed their desert, and that the law was holy, and the penalty just and good; and he brought in an everlasting righteousness, that magnified the law and made it honorable. Hence we see that the obedience and sufferings of Christ answered the same end in the divine government, as the execution of the penalty upon all transgressors. Both manifest the nature of sin, honor the divine government, and display the holy attributes of Jehovah. Although the church of God is purchased with his own blood, which cleanses from all sin, that is, from all its evil consequences, yet it does not annihilate sin, so as to render believers guiltless; for they still remain deserving of punishment; if they do not, they are entitled to happiness on the ground of justice; but the sufferings of Christ did not consist in receiving the exact personal desert of every sinner; if it did, the quantity of evil in the universe would not have been lessened by his atonement. But it consisted in showing the evil nature of sin, honoring the divine law, and displaying the perfections of the Godhead, and thus made it consistent with the divine government, for God to remain just in punishing, and not unjust in forgiving the penitent. Here justice and mercy met together, righteousness and peace embraced each other. Believers have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins. It is God that justifieth; but the

blood of Jesus is the meritorious ground on which he justifies, and in this sense believers are justified by the blood of Christ.

3. Believers are justified by faith ; for, says the apostle, " we conclude that a man is justified by faith." Faith in Christ is the gospel condition of salvation. " For what saith the scriptures, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness ; now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt, but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Thus faith is as necessary for salvation under the gospel, as perfect obedience was for the continuance of God's favor under the law. The fulfilment of the law would have preserved harmony and blessedness. Genuine gospel faith reconciles the sinner to the divine government, unites him to all holy beings, and diffuses order, beauty, and tranquillity ; it is therefore as necessary under the gospel as perfect obedience was under the law. When believers exercise gospel faith, they reject their own righteousness, humbly feeling their ill desert ; the very condition supposes they feel unrighteous, and unable to answer the demands of the law, otherwise it would not be necessary to apply and depend on the righteousness of Christ as the ground of justification in the sight of the law, and for this reason repentance and faith are coupled together in the gospel. " Jesus preached repent ye and believe." Gospel faith is an operative principle and purifies the heart ; for " in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth

any thing nor uncircumcision but faith which worketh by love." Thus believers are justified by exercising gospel faith, as it fulfils the gospel requirement ; for " he that believeth shall be saved."

4. Believers are justified by gracious words ; for it is written, " By thy words thou shalt be justified." When believers are justified in the presence of the assembled universe, it will be necessary for evidence to appear in their favor, that they have embraced the gospel terms of salvation ; and the scriptures require two witnesses to establish a fact. It is written, " At the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death ;" but " in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Hence we may see the necessity of the believer's evidences. The gracious words of believers are evidence that they have embraced the gospel terms of salvation ; for it is declared that " by their words every controversy shall be tried." A confession of faith is one evidence of its existence ; he that confesses Christ before men in the faith of the gospel, him shall Christ confess before his Father and the holy angels. It is difficult to believe that a person exercises true repentance, and genuine faith, without openly confessing his sins, and declaring his dependence on the Saviour's righteousness ; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But to show that it is not only proper but necessary for words to express the exercises of the heart, the apostle declares that, " with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth

confession is made unto salvation." So that gracious words form a necessary evidence by which believers will be justified. And in this sense are believers justified by their words.

5. Believers are justified by their works. Says the apostle, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified." Good works are a necessary evidence of gospel faith, because they are its natural fruit, and confirm the believer's words. Gospel faith, as has been observed, is an operative principle, and purifies the heart: it is a fountain that sends forth sweet waters. If any man believes there is one God he does well, or believes right; but if that is all, he does no more than the devils, for they believe and tremble; but such faith without works is dead, being alone. If any one should make ever so great professions of faith, it would be no evidence of its existence unless he brought forth fruit meet for repentance. Though he should speak with the tongue of men and of angels and has not charity, he becomes as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. That good works are evidence which will be produced at the day of judgment is confirmed by the words of our Lord, for he shall say unto them in that day, "I was an hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me;" and from such evidence he pronounces them blessed. Thus believers are justified by their works, for they confirm their words, and establish sufficient evidence, before the assem-

bled universe, that they have embraced the terms of divine acceptance. Hence we learn in what sense believers are justified, by each of those things pointed out in the gospel. They are justified freely by the grace of God, which concerted and effected the whole plan of gospel justification. They are justified by the blood of Christ, as the meritorious ground of their acceptance, for without the shedding of his blood there could be no remission of sins; his atonement is that alone which can render God just in justifying the believer. They are justified by gospel faith, the exercise of which fulfils the gospel requirement for salvation. They are justified by gracious words as a necessary evidence of gospel faith.—They are justified by good works which are a confirming witness of the sincerity of their words, and prove that they flow from that faith which worketh by love and purifies the heart. Although it is proper to say believers are justified by each of these several things mentioned in the gospel; yet it would be improper to say they can be justified without all of them, for they are not so many distinct justifications, but only so many inseparable links in the great chain of gospel justification. It is thought that many by attempting to separate what God has thus joined together, have led themselves into fatal error and delusion.

Secondly, we were to consider the reason why all these things are necessary for gospel justification. Upon this we shall make but few observations, as the reason has already been partly brought into view.

All these things appear necessary to display the holy attributes of Jehovah and happy his moral kingdom. It could never have been known to creatures that God was gracious and merciful, if he had never exercised grace and mercy; therefore his justifying believers in a gracious manner brought these attributes into view before the intelligent universe. It is to the ill deserving alone that grace and mercy can be exercised, and it cannot be exercised to them without injustice, unless the law they have broken be made honorable. Hence we see the necessity of the blood of Jesus to honor the law which mortals have broken, so that God can be just and justify the believer. Here justice and mercy were displayed. As sin brought disorder and confusion, and disqualified man for the enjoyment of holy beings, it was necessary for gospel faith to be the condition of salvation, as it is gospel faith alone which reconciles the sinner to the divine government, and diffuses happiness among believers, by flowing out in holy words and actions, which are the only evidences that will admit believers into the society of holy beings, and enable them to mingle in the heavenly employment of receiving and communicating happiness. They can never learn the song of Moses and the Lamb, without hearts glowing with holy exercises; and without words and actions here, we can never unite hereafter in chanting the seraphic theme. Hence we see that every thing by which believers are justified, is necessary to display the divine good-

ness, and happy God's moral kingdom.

In view of what has been said, we may infer 1st. The great goodness of God in all his dealings towards his creatures; that all his works are mercy to his kingdom, and that he pursues its highest happiness in making all things subservient to that end. Therefore there is the greatest reason for rejoicing that the Lord reigns, and that he will do all his pleasure. We may infer 2d. That the atonement consisted in something more than obedience, for obedience only could never have made an infinite display of the turpitude of sin, nor have honored a law by approving its penalty, which threatened infinite punishment for transgression. And that it would be a great insult to divine justice to ask the forgiveness of an infinite offence, without depending upon an atonement for justification, which had infinitely honored the law. We may infer 3d. That the atonement is of infinite value, and sufficient to render God just in justifying sinners, who are infinitely guilty if they are but believers in Jesus. We may infer 4th. That there is no foundation for believing that the personal sins of mankind were imputed to Christ and in him were punished to the extent of their deserts; for if the sufferings of Christ consisted in receiving the personal deserts of sinners, and to the extent of what divine justice could require, it would render the penalty of the law useless, instead of magnifying it, and making it honorable. And that it would be unjust to require any thing further of sinners, as it would be exacting more than their sins

deserved, and of course all gospel requirements would be but unreasonable demands.—

We may infer, 5th. That external exercises of religion are gospel requirements, and should not be neglected, but attended in a humble, solemn manner; for our external conduct will appear in judgment either for or against us; by our words we shall be justified or condemned.

We may infer, 6th. That faith which is not operative and productive of good words and works is not the gospel requirement, and that it is a lamp without oil, which will be extinguished in the day of the Lord's appearing.

"For what doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and hath not works, can faith save him?" Such faith certainly will not, "for faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. We infer, 7th. That

reliance on works as the meritorious ground of acceptance with God, is building upon a sandy foundation which will not stand when the winds and the storm rage against it, because it is not founded upon the rock Christ Jesus, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." We may infer, 8th.

That personal holiness is absolutely necessary for salvation; "for without holiness no man shall see the Lord." All that are destitute of gospel faith, which is a principle of holiness, are totally disqualified for the society of holy beings, and are fit only to mingle with the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, who shall have their part in the lake

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that burns with fire and brimstone. We may infer, 9th. That if any reject understandingly any thing included in gospel justification, they must finally fail of salvation, for in the day of retribution they will be weighed in the gospel balance, and will be found wanting, and the wrath of God must abide upon them.

We may infer, 10th. That there is a great work to be performed in order for final justification.

We must depend on the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and rely alone on the blood of Jesus as the meritorious ground of acceptance with God, and exercise that faith which worketh by love and purifies the heart, and confess Christ before men, that he may confess us before his Father and the holy angels; and finally work out our own salvation with fear and trembling: then we shall live in peace, die in hope, and beyond the grave receive that eternal weight of glory, which God the righteous judge shall give to all them that love his appearing.

On Conformity to this world.

NO. I.

PAUL in his epistle to the Romans, whom he addresses as beloved of God, called to be saints; after beseeching them by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; exhorts them saying;—"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Our Saviour char-

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acterizing his true disciples and followers declares, "If ye were of the world the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The Jews, God's ancient, covenant people, were remarkably distinguished from all other nations,—by their theological system and by their religious rites; compared with which, the systems of the Gentiles even in their most improved state, were vanity and a lie, and their religious rites, an abomination.—With allusion to Israel, whom God thus distinguished by his grace, the apostle Peter, addressing believers in Christ, thus describes them, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

If any man be in Christ he is declared to be *a new creature*. With such, old things, are said to have passed away, and all things to have become new.—From these passages, and numerous others of similar import, that might be adduced, it is manifestly the will of the Lord that his disciples should, by their holiness, distinguish themselves from the world. It is their indispensable duty, an object which they should ever keep in view and with respect to which they should ever be on their guard. By causing their light to shine before those who are without, important ends are to be answered. Herein is my Father glorified, saith Christ to his disciples, if ye bring forth much fruit,—so shall ye be my disci-

ples. Thus shall ye make it appear that ye have learned of Christ, have imbibed his spirit, and I will not be ashamed to own you. The disciples of Christ by separating themselves from the world which lieth in sin, prove the reality and excellence of their religion. They make it appear that a mighty work hath been wrought upon their hearts, to the glory of the holy Trinity.—They use the most powerful means to advance the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. By making it manifest that they are new creatures, that they possess something which mankind in common do not, a pearl of inestimable value—by showing that they are governed by a spirit as much superior to that which reigns in selfish men as the heavens are above the earth; they diffuse light for the conviction of the ungodly and use the most powerful means to recover lost souls. Two kingdoms divide the universe as opposite in the temper by which their respective subjects are governed as light and darkness, holiness and sin, and the subjects of the kingdom of darkness must be miserable for ever unless they are made sensible of their deplorable condition and induced to renounce the wicked one and all his works. Surely then it is vastly important that the children of light should distinguish themselves. If they are conformed to this world, so that no important difference appears between them and the children of this world, the latter looking upon themselves justified in their conduct, will feel secure until their condition be past remedy.

These preliminary observa-

tions show our subject worthy the attention of all who call themselves Christians.

Such is the frailty of man, even at his best estate, and so full is the world of temptation, that we are ever prone to err. To avoid extremes, and pursue the golden mean is the happiness of the wise and pious few.

With respect to the subject under consideration, there is great danger on both sides. Perhaps there is no subject on which it is more difficult, on all occasions, precisely to determine the path of duty.

Having the same ends in view, the glory of God and the good of mankind, the increase of vital piety, the honor of religion and advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the friends of Jesus, under various degrees of light and information, may pursue very different measures. With a desire to promote these important ends, some have been led to withdraw from the world, to conceal themselves in convents, to deprive themselves of the most agreeable, social connections, and undergo great bodily mortification. Others having more light, do not proceed such lengths, yet maintain such a rigid austerity of manners, and exhibit such a gloomy air, that they excite disgust, rather than recommend the cause of religion. On the other hand, with a view to remove prejudice and win souls to the altogether lovely Saviour, some may be in danger of so far conforming to the world as to confound all visible distinction of character, between the subjects of the two kingdoms, respectively; and thus defeat the very object they wish to accomplish. For if the

people of the world, can discern no material difference between their own conversation and that of the professors of Christianity, instead of being alarmed, they will conclude their condition safe.

Hence, it appears highly expedient to lay down some rules by which to determine our duty in this matter, or distinctly to point out in what sinful conformity to the world consists.

As governed by a benevolent disposition, we would wish to render ourselves as acceptable to our fellow men as we possibly can, and yet maintain a consistency of character, so it is undoubtedly our duty to conform to the world in all things of an innocent or indifferent nature. To distinguish ourselves in such things is no mark of Christian wisdom, benevolence or humility, but rather an evidence of the contrary. It is with respect to such things, that we have the example of the same great apostle, who exhorts us not to be conformed to this world, when he assures us, that he was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.* This same great and good man, who hath set before us a most illustrious example, though so ready to conform to all men in things of an indifferent nature, well knew where in other things to make a stand and remain immovable. While in one view he seemed ready to turn with the times and accommodate himself to the particular prejudices and humors of those with whom he was conversant and whose good he was endeavoring to promote; in another, he ap-

* 1 Cor. ix. 20—22

appears fixed like a rock in the sea dashed with the foaming billows. Without deviating in the least from that consistency, which constitutes the beauty, felicity and glory of the Christian character, we find him at one time declaring, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth,"—shaving his head and purifying himself in the temple—circumcising Timothy that he might give no offence to the Jews, though he knew the ceremonial institutions were abolished and that he had a right to claim his liberty; again we hear him expressing himself in the following decisive language; "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—Again, we find him withstanding Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed for his dissimulation, in keeping up a distinction between Jews and believing Gentiles, who were one in Christ Jesus. While in the exercise of self-denial, he had learned to give up his own right, and suffer great personal inconvenience, for the sake of benefitting others; he had learned, also, to be scrupulously exact in maintaining that system of evangelical truth, by the knowledge, the love and practice of which alone, God can be glorified and sinners saved.

While he was ready to labor with his own hands, that the gospel might not be chargeable, he steadfastly maintained the right of those who preach the gospel to live of the gospel.

In mentioning things of an innocent or indifferent nature, with respect to which, it be-

comes the servant of Christ to conform, that he may render himself more acceptable and be more useful, it may not be amiss to specify the article of *dress*. With respect to apparel, perhaps there can be no better rule given than the following: Dress yourself in such a manner that no particular notice may be taken of it. The mode of dress is continually fluctuating, and so far as decency, convenience and usefulness are regarded, religion has as little to do with one as with another.—If any fashion be introduced, trespassing upon either of these rules, it surely behoves those, who are called to be saints, and who would wish to do all the good in their power, not to conform. Singularity when thus rendered necessary, though it may expose to reproach, is nevertheless commendable. To appear the first in the fashion, is an object below the Christian character. It is not agreeable to the directions of the apostle on this subject. According to him the adorning of a follower of the blessed Jesus should not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but it should be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

So with respect to modes of civility, such as shaking hands, taking off the hat, making obeisance and the like, it is undoubtedly our duty to conform, provided there be nothing in the custom derogatory from that profound homage we owe our Creator. In the obedience which

the proud courtier Haman required, and which it is probable was customarily paid him, which however humble Mordecai refused to render, it is reasonable to conclude there was something sacrilegious and profane, as the ground of his refusal. Thus were a traveller providentially cast among Papists, it would be his duty to refuse compliance with their idolatrous rites.—Should he bow to the consecrated host, he would offend the God who is above, who is jealous of his honor, will not give his glory unto another, not even to the highest angel in heaven, much less to a consecrated wafer.

(To be continued.)

Q. and R.

DIALOGUE.

On the Resurrection.

Q. SIR, I have several times heard you speak of the resurrection of the wicked, as being not a benefit or fruit of Christ's redemption; but have not been able to clearly apprehend your meaning. I will therefore thank you for a free and clear expression of your ideas on the subject.

R. Sir, I will cheerfully attempt it; hoping, if my ideas are not according to truth, that you, or some other person, will set me right.

The scriptures inform us, "That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." They also teach us, that the wicked, as well as the righteous, will be raised by Christ. But I think the scrip-

tures do not speak of the resurrection of the wicked, who die in their sins, as a *benefit* obtained for them by Christ's mediation. They do not represent their resurrection as a favor or blessing, conferred upon them by Christ. But whilst the resurrection of the saints is foretold and promised, as an unspeakable blessing, and the fruit of Christ's mediation; that of the wicked seems rather to be revealed and denounced, as a curse. According to Daniel, Of the many who sleep in the dust of the earth, when they shall awake, "some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And Christ said, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

The bodies of the saints will be raised by Christ, and fashioned like unto his glorious or glorified body, that they may reign with him in life for ever—that, in a state of re-union with their souls made perfect in holiness, they may eternally share with them in all the glory and happiness of the heavenly state. But the bodies of the wicked will be raised for a directly contrary purpose—that in a re-union with their souls abandoned to the dominion of perfect wickedness, they may participate with them in the pains of the second death, by having their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. Therefore, whilst the righteous are, with propriety, said to come forth to the resurrection of life; the wicked

may be said to come forth to the resurrection of death—the second death, that death which is, emphatically, *the wages of sin*. Is it possible, then, to conceive of the resurrection of the wicked, as a privilege or blessing, procured for them by the mediation of Christ?

Q. But doth not the apostle speak of it in this light? where he says, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1 Cor. xv. 20, 21, 22.

R. I am sensible that some consider these words as proving, that the resurrection of *all* mankind is a fruit of Christ’s mediation or redemption, and to be considered as a benefit which he hath obtained for every one of the human race. But how that resurrection, which is not to life, but to damnation—to suffer the pains of the second death, in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, can be justly considered as a privilege or benefit of Christ’s mediation, to the subjects of it, I do not understand, nor can I conceive. Nor do I think the apostle, in the cited passage, or in any other, meant to teach any such thing. But the apostle’s meaning is to this effect, viz. As in Adam, *all that are his*, even all his posterity, die, in consequence of his disobedience: so in Christ, *all that are his*, all whom the Father gave him effectually to redeem and save, and who become vitally united to him by faith, really in him, shall be made alive, in consequence of his obe-

dience unto death, and of his resurrection *as their head*. Therefore, the apostle, after the last cited words, *so in Christ shall all be made alive*, immediately adds, “But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward *they that are Christ’s* at his coming.” And by them that are Christ’s the apostle, elsewhere explains himself to mean, *them that are in Christ*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit—in whom the Spirit of God dwells—who have the Spirit of Christ, and through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, and crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts; in opposition to those who indulge, and live in, and practise the works of the flesh; and who of course, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* It is accordingly remarkable, that throughout this fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians, the apostle speaks of the resurrection of none except them that are Christ’s—of none but true believers and real Christians, whose bodies will be raised in glory, spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal. Of *these only*, and of this blessed resurrection of life, doth the apostle treat in this chapter; but says not a word about the resurrection of any other characters, or of any other resurrection, than that which will be unto life, and a happy and glorious immortality. Nor should we certainly know, that any others, or any of the finally wicked, would be raised from the dead, if it was not revealed in and confirmed by other passages of scripture.

Q. But since death, even tem-

* See Rom. viii. 1, 9, 13, and Gal. v. 19—24.

poral or bodily death, came by sin, would not Adam's offspring have been subject to it, in case there had been no mediator or redemption? But in that case, can it be supposed that they would be raised again? And will it not, therefore, follow, that the resurrection of even the wicked, is a fruit of Christ's mediation or redemption?

R. We cannot tell what would have been, in case no mediator had been appointed, nor any provision made for the redemption or salvation of fallen man. Whether, in that case, Adam, after his fall, would have been continued on the earth, to propagate his race—whether he would have had any posterity or not, are questions, which we are totally unable to answer. But as God had appointed a mediator, and determined upon the plan of redemption by Christ, he was pleased, after man's disobedience, before he passed any sentence upon him, to intimate his gracious design, by the declaration in the sentence passed on the serpent, *that the seed of the woman should bruise his head.*—And in consequence of the mediatorial interposition, things were placed upon a new footing with respect to man, and a new state of trial commenced, under circumstances very different from what was otherwise to have been expected. It is accordingly observable, that when God had arraigned our first parents, and brought them to a confession of their transgression, after intimating his gracious design, he passed a sentence on them, but in language very different from that of the original threatening. The threatening was “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou

shalt surely die.” But the sentence upon Adam, particularly, was in these words, “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

In this sentence, the word death, or die, is not once used, and perhaps no other word signifying the same thing, that was intended by dying, in the penalty originally annexed to disobedience.—Is it not most agreeable to the tenor of the scriptures, to view the case pretty much in this point of light? viz. That in consequence of the mediatorial interposition of Christ, the full execution of the original penalty was suspended, and man placed in a state of trial upon the mediatorial plan, which was to continue several thousands of years, and in which all those things were to take place, which were but best calculated to answer all the purposes designed by God to be accomplished under this new dispensation and state of trial: and particularly, various testimonials and expressions of his holy displeasure against mankind for their sin: and that among these testimonies of God's displeasure, *this* of their returning to the dust, one after another, in constant succession, should hold a distinguished place,

as a very striking evidence and proof of his great and constant displeasure at their wickedness, and of its certain issue in the utter and everlasting ruin of all, who do not repent, and obtain forgiveness in the revealed way, through a mediator. And further, that when all the purposes are accomplished, which God designed to have effectual under this new dispensation, *then* Christ will come to make a final settlement, and raise up all who had returned to the dust, to receive their respective rewards—that he will then raise those, who, by faith in him and obedience to the gospel, complied with the proposed terms of forgiveness and eternal life, to enter upon and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, as the effect of God's free love, and as the fruit and reward of his mediation and merits—and those, who, by unbelief and continued disobedience, rejected the proposed plan of forgiveness and salvation, and died in their sins, to receive the wages, the due reward of sin, the penalty of disobedience, by enduring the pains of the second death in the burning lake, with such increased intenseness, as will be answerable to the increased guilt of those, who lived under, and slighted and abused, the light and grace exhibited in the gospel. And thus the death at last inflicted on those, who received not the benefits of Christ's redemption, may explain what was meant by dying, when originally threatened as the penalty of disobedience, the wages of sin—even complete everlasting misery of the whole man in both soul and body, in a total exclusion from all good and abandonment to all evil, under

sensible expressions of God's indignation and wrath.

Q. But temporal, bodily death came by sin.

R. True, it did. So likewise did the thorns and thistles, and all the noxious plants and weeds, with which the earth hath abounded, since man transgressed, and God cursed the ground for his sake. And so likewise do all the pains and sorrows and afflictions of every kind, with which any are distressed in the present life. All these come by sin, are procured by it and fruits and consequences of it, and expressions of God's holy displeasure against it. But it doth not from hence follow, that these are the very same evils, either in kind or degree, that were intended by death or dying in the original threatening. So, altho' bodily death came by sin, yet it doth no more follow from thence, that it is the very same thing that was meant in the first threatening; but, like the thorns and thistles and numerous afflictions, *it may be a temporary thing, peculiar to the state of trial introduced by Christ's mediatorial interposition, and suited to answer the purposes of divine Providence during the continuance of this state.* And as the sacrifices offered for sin, before the coming of Christ, were called atonements, not because they made a real and satisfactory atonement for sin, but because they prefigured and represented, and were shadows or types of the true atonement, which Christ hath since made by his own blood; so man's return to the dust, when, to the eye of sense, he is totally and finally cut off from life and all good, and all his hope and happiness destroyed and

entirely gone for ever, might perhaps obtain the name of death, in part at least, because it is the most striking and effecting emblem and figure, of any thing actually seen here, of the complete everlasting separation of the whole man from all good to all evil, under sensible expressions of divine wrath, in which consists that eternal death which is the wages of sin.

Q. Is not Christ vested with the high authority and honor and powers of the supreme and final Judge of the quick and the dead, and will he not exercise and display the same, in raising the dead and passing and executing the final sentence, in regard to both the righteous and the wicked as a reward of his obedience and sufferings for the redemption and salvation of sinful men?

R. I readily admit that this is the case. Yet whilst true believers, who have done good, come forth to the resurrection of life, as a blessed and glorious privilege procured for them by his mediation, and to be enjoyed by them as a fruit of his redemption; the wicked will, by his almighty power, be raised up, and come forth to the resurrection of damnation. And although Christ, by what he hath done in his mediatorial character, hath obtained for himself, to be exercised in his incarnate person, the distinguished privilege and high prerogative, not only, of raising and rewarding his saints; but also, of raising the wicked dead, and passing and executing the sentence of final condemnation upon them; and in this sense, his raising them is a fruit of his mediation, and an honor and matter of joy to his church; yet to the wicked their resurrec-

tion, to suffer the second death, is not a benefit flowing to them from his redemption, nor to them an object of desire and hope, but, rather, of dread and horror.

Q. I thank you for the pains you have taken to explain your ideas; but must take some time to consider and weigh what you have stated, before I express an opinion on the subject of this conference. And as it is probable, that I shall not have another interview with you very soon, if ever; in case there shall appear to me to be any serious and really weighty objections to your sentiments, possibly I may communicate them in a letter.

R. If my sentiments are not according to truth, I wish they may be corrected, and become agreeable to it. And therefore, if to you, or to others, it shall appear, that the leading ideas which I have expressed, are liable to serious and really weighty objections; I would willingly see them clearly stated, and hope I may be able to consider and examine them with candor, and an honest desire to know the truth.

Q. and R.

DIALOGUE.

On the import of 2 Cor. xii. 16.

Q. SIR, I find some difficulty in reconciling Paul's observation to the Corinthians, that, being crafty, he caught them with guile, with Peter's exhortation, to lay aside all guile; and with Paul's own words in another part of his same epistle, where, speaking of the manner in which he and his fellow-la-

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borers officiated in the gospel ministry, he said, "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, *not walking in craftiness*, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." With this account, his declaration, that, being crafty, he caught them with guile, seems to be inconsistent; as well as with the words of the apostle Peter.

R. Had Paul meant to tell the Corinthians, that he, being crafty, had in fact caught them with guile, I do not see how his words could be well reconciled with the other passages you have mentioned. But I conceive Paul did not mean to assert any such thing.

Q. Did not mean to assert any such thing!—But his declaration was express. He said in so many words, "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." 2 Cor. xii. 16.

R. Though Paul wrote these words; yet they are not to be viewed as a declaration of what he actually did; but of what his enemies falsely suggested concerning him. The 16th, 17th, and 18th verses run thus: "But be it so. I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile. Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?"—As if the apostle had said, Though it be true, that I did not burden you with the expense of my support, when I preached the gospel to you; yet the false apostles,

mentioned in the preceding chapter, who labor to destroy my character and influence among you, say or suggest, that, being a designing crafty man, I artfully obtained considerable sums from you through the agency of others, whom I employed for that purpose.—But was this the case? Did I make a gain—did I obtain any thing of you, by those whom I sent among you? I did not.—I desired Titus to visit you, and sent another brother and fellow laborer with him. Did Titus make a gain of you, by persuading you to contribute any thing in return for his services, either for his own use, or for mine? Did not he, and I, and the other brother, manifest the same spirit and express the same disinterested regard for your best good, and pursue one and the same course, in ministering to you freely—gratuitously—without exacting or taking any pecuniary reward? You know that this was the case. And therefore the suggestion of those deceitful workers and false apostles, that, being crafty, I caught you with guile, is unfounded and false. That such is the general import of the passage, will, I think, appear clear and indisputable, by a careful attention to its scope, and connection with the preceding context, and with the things contained in the eleventh chapter of this epistle, and in the ninth chapter of his first epistle to the same church.

Q. Sir, If your explanation exhibits the true meaning of the passage, as I am rather inclined to believe it does, I think the advocates for pious frauds, can derive no support from this example of Paul.

R. If any cite this passage as furnishing an example to countenance guileful practices, or any deceitful artifices, in regard to the things of religion, I think, they pervert the words from their true to a very opposite meaning.

Q. Well, I am more and more convinced, that when we read the scriptures, we ought to pay particular attention to the scope and connection of the several passages, to the subject of which they treat, to the object or design of the speaker, &c. Otherwise we may be exposed to take in false ideas from the mere sound of words, or from a particular sentence or proposition, which, if it stood singly and alone, would convey a very different idea from what it does, when viewed in the connection in which it stands, and with reference to the manifest design of the speaker.

R. Your remark is very just. —By detaching particular propositions found in the scriptures, from the passages in which they are used, and applying them in the sense which they would most naturally suggest, if they stood singly and alone, we might make sad work with the Bible, and both prove and disprove the same things,—the grossest falsehoods, as well as the most certain truths. Therefore, when a preacher takes, for his text, some particular proposition, or sentence, or part of a sentence, because the words, taken by themselves, suggest an idea, or seem to favor a sentiment, which he may wish to inculcate, it becomes him to examine very carefully into their true meaning and import, in their proper connection, and as used in the

place where they are found,—lest he be led or take a liberty, from the mere sound of words, to preach doctrine contained neither in that particular text, nor in any other passage of the sacred volume.

From the Christian Observer.

Counterpart to the remarks on Ministerial Faithfulness, drawn from the example of John the Baptist.

[Concluded from p. 108.]

IN a former paper I troubled you with some Remarks on the nature of Ministerial Faithfulness, drawn from the example of John the Baptist, and I promised to add a few observations applicable to the case of hearers.

We repair to Church, let it be supposed, expecting to be entertained by an oratorical sermon, or wishing to hear some doctrinal point satisfactorily stated and discussed; but the preacher disappoints us by a plain and pointed censure of some particular vice. Now may not this be a vice to which we are subject? May not the very disappointment which we feel be an indication of our resting too much in general truths? Like the hearers of John the Baptist, we love to be instructed on any subject rather than that of our own individual faults, and like them we are displeased with the preacher because he fails to satisfy our curiosity, to confirm our prejudices, to amuse our fancy, and to gratify our taste. Many persons seem to imagine that a

disposition merely to attend the preaching of the gospel, is a sufficient evidence of a religious state. They do not consider that the motives which produce the crowded congregations of modern times, may be no better than those which led one multitude to follow John the Baptist into the wilderness, and another multitude to gather round our Saviour when he preached his sermon on the mount. "Bring forth," said John, "fruits meet for repentance."—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, (said our Saviour) shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Novelty of every kind is almost sure to entertain. The fame of a new preacher of repentance drew soldiers and publicans, as well as pharisees, into the desert, and He "to whom the spirit was given without measure," He who was pre-eminently "holy, harmless, and undefiled," was eagerly followed by many of the profane, and was welcomed with general hosannahs as he entered into Jerusalem; a city distinguished for shedding the blood of the prophets, and now about to fill up the measure of its guilt.

I am persuaded, Mr. Editor, that in our days evangelical doctrines seldom fail to be approved by us, provided they are stated in general terms, and are also countenanced by the circle or family in which we dwell. But how do we bear to be reminded of our own besetting sins? John the Baptist tried his hearers by this test. Reader, are you one who desires to know what is amiss in his temper, conversation, and conduct; what part of his past actions needs to be re-

pented of, or of his present purposes to be changed; what are the sins of his particular age, temperament, and circumstances; what are the temptations against which he has studiously to guard; what the affections which he must specially control; what the lusts which it is his duty to renounce? Have you ears to hear on these topics? Have you a heart to bow under this species of reproof? If you have not, however sound may be the doctrines which you profess, you are not sound in your heart. You would have been offended with John the Baptist, if you had been one of the multitude which went to hear him; for he would have warned you of that very fault of which you cannot bear to be admonished. Are you a proud person? He would have exhorted you to beware of that sin of pride with which you are possessed. Are you luxurious and intemperate? Put away, he would have cried, that sloth and self-indulgence: rise early: be temperate in all things. Are you expensive and ostentatious? Reduce, he would have said, that splendor in your equipage, and that unbecoming finery in your dress. Are you violent in your temper? Lay aside, he would have said, these sinful passions. "Keep thy tongue as with a bridle."—"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Are you peevish and discontented, and, though blest with much prosperity, apt to complain of some little circumstance in your lot. Fret not, he would have said, because a servant has disobeyed you; because a friend seems to have neglected you; because some one has spread a

story to your prejudice ; Grieve not because taxes are high ; because additional economy must be practised ; because the number of your superfluities must be a little retrenched : and if you should then complain of the deficiency of his preaching, he would have refused to address you in any other strain than this. Again are you overcome by temptations ? Pluck out, he would have said, this right eye : cut off this right hand : part with this Herodias, this forbidden indulgence. In vain do you "do many things" while this one thing is retained.

Here again I would remark, that I would by no means be thought to undervalue the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. These unquestionably are of infinite importance, and ought often to be urged with earnestness and force. Be assured, however, that if you are of that temper which forbids your hearing patiently of your faults small as well as great : if you repel all those who are disposed to touch on subjects of this sort, you then are no real disciple of Christ ; for the same spirit which is necessary to the humble acceptance of the gospel will incline you to submit no less readily to reproof. Can any man, for example be really trusting in Christ, who is not convinced of his sin ; or can any man be truly convinced of his sin in general, who will not bear to hear of any one particular fault ? How indeed can he, who brooks no admonition, be said even to pray in sincerity and truth ; for is it not the object of prayer to obtain spiritual improvement ? Is not prayer one of the means of edification, and is not the ad-

monition of our fellow-creatures another ? And may we not, therefore, reasonably suspect our very prayers to God of being hypocritical, if we are manifestly unwilling to take any other mode of correcting our faults ? As a philosopher, who is intent on some important discovery, feels indebted to those who will point out a mistake into which he may have fallen, and will in any measure direct him in his future course, so the Christian, whose great object is to detect the past errors of his heart, and to advance in the way of eternal life, will not fail to welcome faithful reproof.

To conclude, That which John the Baptist did at the hazard of his very life, let Christians encourage both their ministers and private friends unreservedly to do, by shewing that it may be done without exciting the least offence. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and shalt not suffer sin in him." "Exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." S. P.

From the Christian Observer.

YOU have complied with my wishes, by publishing the account of my visit to Theophilus. In the persuasion that every important occurrence in the life of such a character, cannot fail to afford instruction and entertainment to many of your readers, I now send you some further anecdotes respecting him.

Let me first, however, pre-

mise, that the flattering hopes which we entertained for his recovery were not disappointed ; in a few days after the dispatch of my former narrative, we had the satisfaction to see him restored to our prayers in perfect health. The news of a national victory would scarcely have diffused more joy in the little circle of his friends and admirers.

When Theophilus succeeded to the estate which he now enjoys, he found a living attached to it, in the possession of a clergyman who was beloved by his parishioners, and generally esteemed for his piety and benevolence. The opinion entertained of him did not exceed his merits, and Theophilus was delighted to discover in him, a man of polished manners and elegant conversation, learned, judicious, and intelligent, and he courted an acquaintance with him, which was soon improved into an intimacy.

At this period, the religious attainments of Theophilus were of a standard little superior to what mine were when I lately entered his house. In the course of his education at school and the university, he had gone thro' the usual routine of religious instruction, but the seed was sown among thorns, and the pleasures of this world, "the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, had choked the word, and it had become unfruitful." He attended, indeed, the service of the church with considerable regularity, but rather for the sake of shewing an example of decent conformity than from conviction, or an anxiety to improve. An affecting occurrence which happened about six months after he had

taken possession of his estate, gave a new and profitable turn to his thoughts and views.

The wife of the rector, and mother of four children, died, after an illness of only a few days : Theophilus had too much feeling and humanity not to be deeply affected at this event, and he only waited, according to the established etiquette, until the funeral had taken place, to offer his personal condolence to his friend. Judge of his surprise, when, on the sabbath following the death of the lady, and the day after her interment, he saw the rector enter the church, with a depressed but composed countenance, and with a firm but submissive voice heard him perform his ministerial functions. The discourse which he addressed to his congregation, naturally had a reference to his own situation ; it was pathetic, solemn, and impressive : one passage in it, which was committed to writing at the time, with tolerable accuracy, by a sensible parishioner, has been communicated to me, and was nearly in the following terms.

"You see me, my brethren, with the characters of grief upon my countenance ; they are deeply engraven in my heart. To lose a wife, an amiable beloved wife, the tender mother and kind protector of four dear children, is no trivial sorrow ; but I should be ashamed to appear before you, if, upon this trying affliction, I were to belie the doctrines which I have taught. I sorrow, but not as one without hope ; I know in whom I trust, and I feel his divine support on the present occasion ; it is that alone which enables me thus to address you. Had I sought for consolation in

that worldly wisdom, which men call philosophy, I should not have found it; I should have sunk under the calamity which has befallen me; but the gospel teaches me that the afflictions which Christians suffer here, while they are the deserved punishment of their sins, are also intended to purify their faith, and to prepare them for the enjoyment of that eternal happiness which Christ has purchased for them by his death. In all the dispensations of the Almighty, justice and mercy, where there is room for mercy, are ever united; nor are any of the afflictions to which a believer in Christ is exposed, without abundant sources of consolation. Such an one knows that whom God loveth he chasteneth; and while, therefore, he considers his sufferings as the effect of his sinfulness, and humbles himself under them; he regards them also as proofs of the love of his Creator, who is thus weaning him from earthly attachments. Feeling that 'tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope,' he says in his heart, it is good for me to be afflicted, and he resigns himself to the disposal of his heavenly father, in the hope of eternal life thro' Christ, a hope which elevates him beyond the limits of the world and time.

When the Christian also calls to mind the sorrows and agonies of his dying Redeemer, and whilst he contemplates, with unutterable gratitude, the stupendous display of divine love, in the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, then is his burthen lightened, and his tongue instinctively exclaims in the lan-

guage of inspiration—'The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

As for myself, why should I grieve? because the dear object of my earthly affection has entered into the joy of the Lord? for such is the blessed confidence with which her faith in him has inspired me. No, my dear friends, though I am deprived of a companion in whose society I enjoyed all the happiness which this world can afford, though my children have lost a most affectionate endearing parent, yet my sorrow is well nigh absorbed in the thought of the happiness which she now enjoys. I derive support and consolation from the confidence I feel, that the Lord, in whom she trusted, has taken her to himself, and from the hope that through faith in him I shall again see her a purified saint, in the company of my ever blessed Redeemer."

This was a scene to which few persons present had ever witnessed a parallel, and for which Theophilus was wholly unprepared; his admiration was equal to his surprise; he knew the rector to possess more than a common share of sensibility, and that the warmest affection had ever subsisted between him and his wife. The style of the discourse, the tone and manner in which it was delivered, and the unimpeached integrity of the preacher, did not suffer him to entertain a doubt respecting the sincerity of his resignation, and he felt all the force of the example, although he then was by no means qualified to appreciate the value of the principles which had inspired it.

Theophilus was too much af-

fectured by what he had seen and heard, to accost the rector after the services of the church were finished, but he visited him on the next day, and then, as well as in all his subsequent interviews, found his conversation and deportment in exact correspondence with the doctrines which he publicly taught. The weight of such an example was hardly to be resisted by any mind susceptible of piety or sensibility; and Theophilus was led by it into a train of reflection, upon the power of that religion which could support human nature under the deepest calamity; and he justly concluded, that if it were founded on substantial evidence, the consolation which it inspired was no less rational than solid. He saw clearly that the topics of condolence and resignation, suggested by philosophy, were neither sound in principle nor efficient in practice, and that the frame of mind which they were calculated to produce was a sullen rather than a rational acquiescence: whilst Christianity, on the contrary, inculcated submission without extinguishing feeling, and, by the views and hopes which it inspired, satisfied the reason whilst it alleviated the distress of the afflicted. He determined, therefore, to peruse the scriptures with patient unprejudiced attention.

Theophilus, with whom I have frequently conversed on the interesting subject of the progress of his religious convictions, has confessed to me, that although he immediately discovered in the code of revelation, a system of morality, equally pure, rational, and sublime, founded on the justest conceptions of the

supreme being and the nature of man, and adapted to all people of every country and condition, it was long before he rightly understood, and cordially and practically embraced the fundamental and peculiar truths of Christianity; the ruin of the world by sin, its redemption by the atonement of a crucified Saviour, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. The truth was, as he now acknowledges, that he depended too much upon himself, and had overlooked the necessity of prayer for the divine assistance to enlighten his understanding and purify his heart; hence it was that he perused the scriptures rather as a code of ethics than a revelation, which taught him the alienation of man from God, and the means of his reconciliation with his offended Maker and Judge.

But the pious rector, with whom he now constantly associated, pointed out his errors, and taught him to renounce all dependence upon himself for spiritual improvement, and to trust in him alone who is the author of every good and perfect gift, soliciting his aid by fervent and frequent prayer. Theophilus most readily submitted to his instruction, and being by the divine grace gradually enabled to perceive the grand display of heavenly mercy in the redemption of man, embraced with ardor the gracious invitation of an Almighty Saviour.

This worthy clergyman is now no more; he died about ten years ago, and Theophilus, who can scarcely mention his name without a tear, has since his death liberally maintained his children. They are placed un-

der the care of a pious relation in another county ; and Theophilus, who has undertaken to provide for their temporal welfare, has made a particular bequest in his will for this purpose, lest he should not himself survive to fulfil his engagement.

Theophilus having deliberately adopted the religion of Jesus, determined, in humble dependance on divine support, to act up both to the letter and spirit of it. His first endeavor was to correct himself, and to bring his mind under subjection to the gospel ; and as he was sensible of the natural impetuosity of his temper, as well as of other irreligious propensities, he labored incessantly to subdue them.—The instruction of his family became an object of his early and serious attention ; he was aware both of the obligation of performing this duty, and of the inhumanity of neglecting it. By degrees he extended his care to his dependants and neighbors, and his liberality, which was now under the direction of his piety, aided the influence of his exertions. His progress was opposed by many obstacles, but he was not deterred by them from perseverance. The obnoxious epithet of *Methodist* was applied to him, and his gay friends amused themselves with impotent and profane jokes upon his *conversion*. He had ignorance perpetually, and malice and ingratitude frequently, to contend with ; but these impediments, instead of inducing him to relax his efforts, stimulated him to redouble them, and he had the happiness, in many instances to find them crowned with success. I shall not enlarge upon a sub-

ject which has been so amply detailed in my former narrative, and which describes Theophilus as he now is ; but I have learned one anecdote of his conduct, which so strongly marks his principles and good sense, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of relating it. There never was a period in which it was more necessary to enforce the example which it inculcates.

A short time before the death of his pious instructor, a recruiting party took up its quarters in a small town at no great distance from the residence of Theophilus. The commanding officer, a young man of family and fashion, had contrived a plan for seducing the daughter of a farmer, a tenant of Theophilus, who was apprised of the scheme just in time to prevent the ruin of the girl. On this occasion he wrote a letter of expostulation to the officer, which the other resented as an insult, and brutally challenged him. Theophilus declined the defiance without hesitation, and addressed a second letter of remonstrance and admonition to the officer, which produced an insulting and abusive reply. The report of this transaction was circulated much to the prejudice of my friend, and, as usually happens in such cases, with many circumstances which were wholly unfounded, and which remained for a time uncontradicted ; for Theophilus, satisfied with having performed his duty, was silent on what had passed, from a principle of Christian forbearance to the officer who had insulted him, although he was, at the same time, fully aware of the consequences that might attend his refusal of a challenge.

About a fortnight after this oc-

currence, Theophilus was present at a numerous meeting of the gentlemen of the county; a few of whom had adopted strong prejudices against him on no other grounds than because the invariable rectitude of his conduct, furnished a perpetual contrast to their irregularities. He remarked, what he had been prepared to expect; a cold formality and reserve in their reception of him, little short of incivility. After a moment's deliberation, he requested their attention, explained all the circumstances of the transaction which had led to a correspondence with the officer, and addressed them in terms to the following purport :

" I have been given to understand, what it would pain me much to believe, that my refusal of a challenge has depreciated my character in the estimation of some to whom I have the honor to speak. I know that, even by the laws of honor, I was not bound to meet my challenger ; but I dare not take refuge from reproach in such a plea. No, gentlemen, I am called upon publicly to avow, that in declining the challenge sent to me I acted from a superior motive, from obedience to the law of God, which admits of no compromise with the rules of honor. The master whom I profess to serve, not only requires my obedience, but the avowal of my allegiance, and disclaims the hypocritical service of a disciple, who is ashamed of the name of his Lord. I shall not expatiate on the absurdity, barbarity, and illegality of duelling : to a believer in the doctrines of Christianity, it is sufficient that the practice is condemned by the positive command of the Almighty—Thou

shalt do no murder,—and that it is opposed not only by the letter but by the whole spirit of our holy religion, the essence of which is love to God and man. These are the principles upon which I have acted, and to which, by God's assistance, I am determined ever to adhere, through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report. Eternity is of too serious importance to be staked against the opinion of the world ; and professing to fear him who can destroy both body and soul forever, I dare not offend him by the deliberate commission of a crime which may send me or a fellow creature uncalled into his presence, with the dreadful consciousness of wilful sin, which cannot be repented of."

This address, of which I am enabled only to give you an imperfect sketch, was heard with great surprise, but with an effect much to the credit of those to whom it was offered. It was well known, that at no very distant period, Theophilus would not have declined a challenge, and those who were disposed to attribute his new principles to a methodistical bias, could not refuse their applause to his manly avowal of them, whilst all concurred in approving that conduct which had exposed him to the insult of an unprincipled libertine. Some of the company did not hesitate to express an unqualified approbation of his behavior, and an old and respectable divine spoke with enthusiasm in favor of it, as affording an example which, under similar circumstances, all were bound to imitate, at the hazard of their immortal souls.

I now revert to myself. The

period of my residence with Theophilus is nearly expired, and in a few days I must leave my invaluable friend and benefactor, and return once more to the mixed society of the world. I am too well acquainted with the power of long established habit not to feel some apprehension of danger from the temptations to which I may be exposed, on revisiting the scenes of my former dissipation. Of all my life, I can only reckon the last six months as in any degree devoted to God, and to the care of any own soul, and I feel therefore my want of constant aid from the society, encouragement and example of those who live by the rules of the gospel. This aid I am not to expect from my old friends and associates. My newly acquired principles are, I trust, too firmly fixed, to be shaken by ridicule or sarcasm; on this account I have no alarms; but what I most dread is the contagious influence of the society of those, who though not professed infidels, and even nominal Christians, live without God in the world. The danger of such a society is the greater because it is not as much suspected as it ought to be, and there is a natural tendency to accommodate ourselves to the dispositions and conversations of those with whom we associate, particularly when we are not disgusted by open profaneness, immorality, or indelicacy. Our principles are thus gradually undermined, for want of due care to invigorate and confirm them, for the daily recurrence of frivolous and worldly conversation naturally tends to produce idle habits of thinking, and in time, if not counteracted, to annihilate the

very power of serious reflection and meditation.

I have explained my apprehensions to Theophilus, who is pleased to find that I entertain them; he tells me to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, for the support of divine grace. He has promised to write to me frequently, and to introduce me to the acquaintance of a most respectable clergyman in London, as well as of another friend of his, with an assurance that I may depend on their assistance and advice, in whatever relates to my spiritual concerns. I shall leave him with unfeigned regret, but with this consolatory hope, that a few months will enable me to finish the business which calls me to the metropolis, and that I may then return to his society; for the benefit I have already derived from which I most devoutly return thanks to God.

EDWARD ASIATICUS.

March 24.

An Explanation of Scriptural Types.

NO. VIII.

Abraham and his Family Typical.

HITHERTO in God's gracious dispensation, we are furnished only with typical representations of the person and work of our divine Redeemer; but in the patriarch Abraham the subject is varied and extended, and the character of his immediate posterity is metaphorically exhibited. Though the patriarch may be considered as a type of Christ in being called

from his native country and kindred—sojourning in a strange land—dwelling in a tabernacle or tent—receiving the promise of a numerous seed, &c.—yet it is his family especially which will be produced as typifying evangelical subjects. That this was so designed is very manifest from the declaration of the apostle, Gal. iv. 22. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman—which things are an *allegory*. The apostle himself hath given such an explanation of this allegory, that we cannot misapprehend the subjects designed by it, if we divest ourselves of prejudice and candidly consider his application.—The following subjects are particularly contained in it.

I. Sarah and Hagar.

These saith the apostle, are the two covenants. Of these the first, represented by Sarah, was the gracious promise which God made to the patriarch, Gen. xii. 2, 3. I will make of thee a great nation—and thou shalt be a blessing, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. This was renewed, chap. xv. 5, and xvii. 11, reduced to the form of a covenant, and ratified by a significant token. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. This covenant thus ratified, by way of distinction and eminence, is called, *the promise*. Gal. iii. iv. chap. According to the apostle, Gal. iii. 8. in making this promise, God preached the gospel to Abraham, and Abraham in believing it, believed in the Lord, who counted it to him for righteousness.

As Sarah represented that

promise on covenant made with Abraham, and which comprised all the subjects of the gospel; so Hagar represented that covenant which God made with the Israelites in the wilderness by the hand of his servant Moses. This Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. This is frequently termed, *the law*.—The law was given by Moses. This was the system of carnal ordinances imposed on them, the Jews, till the time of reformation. As Hagar was the maid of Sarah, it was her place and use to aid her mistress, assist in training up the promised son and heir, and subserve the general interest of the family, so it was the design and use of the law, the covenant made at mount Sinai, to subserve the promise, the covenant made with Abraham, by instructing and disciplining the chosen seed, the covenant people, and so preparing them for the adoption of sons. Gal. iv. 1—7. In allusion to Hagar, a maid, who was under the yoke, and from the servile state to which the law reduced the seed of Abraham, it is termed a yoke of bondage, and the Jews submitting to its restraints, and obeying its precepts, are said to be under bondage to weak and beggarly elements. Gal. iv. 9.

II. Isaac and Ishmael.

God promised Abraham a son by Sarah his wife, and to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven. This son Isaac, with his numerous seed, the immediate objects of the promise, were types of Christ and believers in him, that spiritual seed and holy nation, which were the great objects of the covenant ultimate-

ly. Hence saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but of one. And to thy seed which is Christ. Rom. iv. 18. Who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. As Isaac, who was born after the promise, and his numerous posterity, represented the ultimate objects of the covenant, Christ and believers in him; so Ishmael the son of Hagar, the bond-maid, who was born after the flesh, represented that natural seed or posterity of Abraham which proceeded indeed from his loins, but was destitute of his faith, and alienated from his holy obedience in life and practice.

III. The weaning of Isaac.

The child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. However pleasing it might have been to Abraham and Sarah, that the promised son should have so far progressed in life, as to be taken from the breast; yet the unusual hilarity and joy of the occasion were the effects of a divine impulse, and designed to typify the joy and gladness which would pervade the family of God when his seed, progressing from its infant state, should be weaned from weak and beggarly elements, and be nourished and invigorated with the more substantial food of the gospel.—This event, so joyful to Abraham and Sarah, was by Ishmael made an occasion of the derision and contempt of Isaac.—And Sarah saw the son of the

bond-maid mocking. This mocking of Ishmael typified the contempt with which his fleshly, unbelieving seed, especially the chief priests, rulers, and the whole multitude of the people, would treat Christ and believers in him, that spiritual seed promised to Abraham in that everlasting covenant which God made with him. Hence saith the apostle, As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.

IV. The remonstrance of Sarah and the ejection of Ishmael.

The derision and contempt with which Ishmael treated Isaac were very offensive to Sarah, and remonstrating against it, she said to Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And Abraham rose up early in the morning—and sent her away. As the mocking of Isaac by Ishmael procured the dismissal of Hagar, and his ejection from the family of Abraham; so the derision and persecution of Christ by the unbelieving Jews his natural seed, occasionally excited by the law of carnal commandments, procured the abolition of the Sinai dispensation, and their excommunication from the visible family of God. Nevertheless what saith the scripture, Cast out the bond-woman and her son, and the covenants established at mount Sinai, and his fleshly unbelieving seed were ejected from his visible family, and only Sarah, the covenant made with him, and Christ the promised seed remained.—As the ejection of Hagar and Ishmael reduced the family of

Abraham to its genuine simplicity and purity consisting only of Sarah his faithful wife, and Isaac the promised son; so the abolition of the covenant made at mount Sinai the spiritual Hagar, and the excommunication of his natural, unbelieving posterity, those mocking Ishmaels refined his visible family, from the earthly typical alloy and spurious members which adhered to it, and exhibited his covenant and seed in their original purity and beauty. Hagar and Ishmael being cast out, we see Isaac established the unrivalled heir of his promises and blessings; so the ritual being abolished and the unbelieving Jews rejected, we see Christ appointed the heir of all things, the ancient promise of blessing all nations in his seed, fulfilled—and if by faith in him, we become the children of Abraham, and experimentally realize his blessings, convinced of divine fidelity and grace, we shall devoutly acknowledge, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he, and blessed are all they that wait for him. Amen.

From the London Evangelical Magazine.

Thoughts on 1 Cor. vi. 20.

“Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

The powers of the Mind.—

A FRAGMENT.

THE WILL. Let it chuse God in Christ, in preference to all things.—*Judgment.* Let it, as instructed by the word

of God, and enlightened by his Spirit, carefully determine what is to be believed and to be done. *Memory.* Let it treasure up the word of God, the sins I have committed, the mercies I have received.—*Conscience.* Let it be exquisitely tender, without unnecessary scrupolosity.—*Invention.* Let me endeavor to discover new methods of doing good, and how I may do the utmost possible good with the means I possess.—*Imagination.* Let my imagination delight to trace the similitudes used in scripture; such as where a soul dead in sins is compared to a dead body; and where spiritual things are illustrated by the objects of creation.—*Passions.*—1. *Admiration.* Let it be employed upon God’s attributes and works.—2. *Anger.* Let it be turned against myself for sin.—3. *Contempt.* Let it be of worldly pleasures and vanities.—4. *Covetousness.* Let it be of the true riches, and of the best gifts.—5. *Fear.* Let me have a filial fear of offending God, a fear of coming short of the heavenly rest, of the misery hanging over the wicked.—6. *Grief.* Let it be for my own sins, and those of others.—7. *Gratitude.* In reference to God, let it be exerted as in the case of the cleansed leper;* in reference to men, as in the case of Elisha towards the Shunamite.†—8. *Hope.* Let it be of the heavenly happiness, of attaining greater conformity to Jesus; of the further extension of Christ’s kingdom: of men’s not being so wicked as they seem to be.—9. *Jealousy.* Let me have a godly jealousy of my own heart.—10. *Joy.* Let it

* Luke xvii. 18. † 2 Kings iv. 15.

arise from victory over my sins; over death. Let me rejoice in God, and in the progress of the truth.—11. *Love*. Let it be of God on account of what he is in himself, what he hath done for me, is doing for me, and will do for me; of the brethren, and of all mankind.—12. *Revenge*. Against myself for sin, and against sin as my great enemy.—13. *Shame*. Let shame arise in me on account of sins committed, duties omitted, the strength of indwelling sin, and my little knowledge of God.—14. *Zeal*. Let my zeal be for God's honor and for good works.—*SENSES*.—*Sight*. Let my eyes continually look up to God in prayer, faith and humble dependence. Let them be employed in reading his word, and other pious and useful writings. Let them gaze upon his wonderful works of creation.—*Hearing*. Let my ears be attentive to God's word read, or preached. Let them be swift to hear the instruction of the righteous.—*Smelling*. Let the fragrance of every sweet flower, or other odoriferous substance, lead me, as it did the ancient Israelites, to return thanks to that God who could as easily have made every scent in nature ungrateful to my nerves.—*Taste*. Let the pleasant flavor of my food lead me to thank the Lord who could, with equal ease, have made all my food nauseous.—*GIFT OF SPEECH*. Let my tongue be talking of God, and for God; let it be employed in praying to him, and singing his praises; let my discourse be always gracious, wise, reasonable, and kind.—*Hands*. Let them be raised towards Heaven in prayer; let them write for the instruction and comfort of

my fellow-creatures; let them diffuse divine truth in the distribution of the scriptures and other religious books; let them minister to the bodily necessities of the indigent.—*Knees*. Let them bend at God's footstool.—*Feet*. Let them go on the messages of God. J. H. D.

From the (Edinb.) *Religious Monitor*.

ANECDOTE

Of an Italian Bishop.

THERE was an Italian Bishop who had struggled through great difficulties, without repining; and who met with much opposition in the discharge of his episcopal function, without ever betraying the least impatience. An intimate friend of his, who highly admired those virtues, which he thought it impossible to imitate, one day asked the prelate, If he could communicate the secret of being always easy. "Yes," replied the old man, I can teach you my secret, and with great felicity: it consists in nothing more than in making a right use of my eyes." His friend begged him to explain himself. "Most willingly, (returned the Bishop :) In whatever state I am, I first of all look up to heaven, and remember that my principle business is to get there. I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind, how small a space I shall occupy in it, when I come to be interred. I then look abroad into the world, and observe what multitudes are there, who are, in all respects more unhappy than myself.

" Thus I learn where true happiness is placed ; where all our cares must end ; and how very little reason I have to repine, or to complain."

Reader ! what a wise, good, and blessed character !—May we all be ambitious to obtain it ! Go—O man, whosoever thou art, and give all diligence to copy it. Make this *right use of your eyes*, and you shall be approved of by God, and numbered among the children of light.

T Doctor Timothy Dodd, an eminent physician of Rutland in Vermont, riding at full speed to visit a patient dangerously sick, was thrown from his horse, broke his leg and wrenched the foot so as to dislocate it at the ankle. In this deplorable situation the Doctor remained near two hours before any assistance came. In the mean while he crawled to a rock by the side of a run of water, in which he laved the wounds and cleansed them from the clotted blood and the fragments of his stocking which had been impelled into them ; and taking his instruments from his pocket, with astonishing fortitude proceeded to take up a prin-

cipal blood vessel. And when found by his friends was discovered with a pencil in his hand with which he had just concluded writing the following lines :—

Ejaculatory Sonnet.

THY judgments Lord, are holy,
right and just,
Tho' evils press, and tho' we sink to dust ;
Tho' darkness shroud thy throne and cloud thy face,
I cleave to thee and hope thy pardoning grace.
Firm is thy truth, thy promise ever sure,
And Jesus' blood my safety will procure ;
Thy mercy beams with full resplendent ray,
And ope's the portals of eternal day.
Before thy throne I bow beneath thy rod,
And own the arm and angry frown of God ;
Thy hand I feel, nor dare thy dreadful pow'r,
Support me, God, in this tremendous hour.
Whate'er my doom, whate'er my state may be,
Oh, grant me still to put my trust in thee.

Much has been vaunted of the firmness of the ancient stoics ; but he who can enter into the dreadful agonies of the Doctor's distress must confess, that the serene fortitude and true magnanimity of the Christian, by far excel the boasted insensibility of the stoic.

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